

# VIEWPOINT

## Media

### Journalists out of touch, need to be more human

Who watches the watchdog?

A lot of catchy phrases and names have been attached to the media since the free press was established in this country more than 200 years ago.

Some are good, many are bad, and most come from the rank and file of the army of "journalists."

During their banquets, conferences and drink parties, journalists make jokes and tell anecdotes about their experiences and opinions and discuss their efforts to understand the public they are serving.

They're failing.

An attitude of groupthink pervades. As they rub shoulders and sling back the gin they grow out of touch.

There are many levels of readers, from those who buy newspapers to read the comics to those who do so to formulate in-depth political opinions.

But the average reader is middle income, struggling to survive economically and understand how the fast-changing world is affecting them.

Journalists make great efforts to try to understand these readers, but they do so from a distance. They only scratch the surface. Because they are different. They are more educated, more informed and thus, more arrogant.

They also have to juggle the ideals of journalism and the reality of the business, the reality that they have to grind out a story every day, a paper every day, and the reality that they work for a business, not an idealistic institution.

Some say the media is a reflection of the society they serve.

Consider this — Huge newspaper chains gobbling up other papers and placing profit atop the priority list. News magazines running the same cover stories. Television newscasts worshipping the 30-second soundbyte, MTV story.

And this — Newspapers pay their future talent, the young, fresh, hungry college graduates, less than almost every other industry.

And this — The public is sick of the media. They have a general understanding of its importance, but they're tired of the predatory, rumor-based stories, especially during election time.

The public is sick of jaded journalists, of those who aren't human, who don't listen, who aren't down to earth, who don't really care, who are not really like them.

That's why the public has unfavorable opinions of the people who are trying to protect them against government abuse.

Don't say that's what people want to read about because that's a lie, a cop out and total garbage.

People in general are fair. They get both sides of the story. They're human. They're not animals.

"I'D LIKE TO VOTE FOR A FIRST-CLASS STAMP THAT WOULD TAKE US BACK TO FIRST-CLASS SERVICE"



## USC VOICES

Question: What is your overall perception of the media in America?



Megan Moran  
Journalism major

"I believe the media has lost track at what they originally set out to do, which is to inform the public. The main purpose has become to entertain instead of inform."



Jeff Britain  
Business major

"Lots of stories go untold. Lots of stories don't have the coverage they need to have. News is lacking on the Third World, the Middle East, and other areas of the world, except maybe Japan."



Krystal Crosby  
Political Science major

"I think the media does a good job, despite being unfair to certain issues. But overall, they do a good job."



Min Wook Kang  
Chemistry major

"I think they are doing a good job in informing the public. Without the media, how can the public know what's going on in world politics and national politics?"

## Cross Fire

### Center should provide birth control

The Thomson Student Health Center at USC is a full-service outpatient medical facility, including a full-service pharmacy.

The center has over-the-counter as well as prescription methods of birth control available for sale to USC students. The health center abides by the standards set by community medical and pharmacy practices in providing birth control options for adults.

Therefore, it would be a rather odd omission to tend to all the health needs of college students, except their sexual health needs.

Whether it's good or bad, USC students are right in line with college students across the country in terms of their sexual behaviors. In a sophisticated research project we've conducted over the past few years, 70 to 80 percent of college freshmen report they had sexual intercourse before coming to USC.

Those heterosexual students not using birth control are at high risk of unwanted pregnancy. All sexually active college students not practicing safer sex (i.e. monogamy, condoms) are at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, including AIDS.

Also, the health center does not dispense birth control without educating the campus about the range of responsible sexual decisions, including abstinence. The health center conducts well over 100 presentations a year for various student groups, and has been able to document a level of positive behavioral change, including increased levels of abstinence and condom use.

All this aside, I think the main issue relates to the common sense approach of prevention. It's my opinion that for too long, medicine has had a curative, rather than preventive, role in people's health. Dispensing birth control to adults to prevent unwanted pregnancy is like providing a healthy diet for cholesterol reduction to prevent unwanted heart disease.

Regardless of one's moral or ethical values about sexuality, it makes medical sense to deal with these issues before the fact rather than after.

- Lisa Mohn

Lisa Mohn is the associate director for health education at the Thomson Student Health Center.

### Funding contraception questionable

"Hey Mom! Did you know your taxes are helping cut a big hunk out of the price of birth control pills and condoms at the student health center?"

Some mothers would need to have their jaws replaced to normal position if they heard their vulnerable children reveal this fact.

Some would say it's good because of the growing number of sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS victims, and that makes sense.

Many mothers, however, would say, "I think there are better ways for my money to be spent."

Parents appreciate their children having lower costs of medicine at the health center. The free doctor checkups and visits also help students and families out. But a pack of Tylenol caplets is a whole different story from a pack of condoms.

Life in college is a tremendously experimental and soul-searching experience. Here one establishes his morals and values. In the issue of sex, some will choose to wait until marriage (stand proud y'all). Others, however will decide they are mature enough to have sex.

The university is a state school with state funding, which comes straight from taxes. Why should everyone, therefore, be obliged to pay for those who choose to have sex. Should we have to support a health center making moral choices we may not agree with?

This is a melting pot of people with different values and beliefs. Some are members of religions and denominations where using birth control is equated to abortion. Either way, they think a life is lost. They are angry because they are funding something they think is wrong. Many also believe the prices and accessibility here promote promiscuity on campus.

Perhaps USC should be stressing other options for students. The college provides many forms of entertainment for students and couples. Through CPU and countless other organizations, there are entertainment and cultural outlets at all hours. Why not spend the money on their budgets?

One is reminded of a mid-'80s song: "We don't have to take our clothes off to have a good time..."

- Brian Garland

Brian Garland is Secretary Historian for the Baptist Student Union.

## Prayer in schools undeniable right

- Octavia Wright

Ahh ... the things people debate.

Should we make alcohol legal to drink at the age of 18 or 21? Should people be allowed to burn the American flag? Should women fight in a war? Is it okay for a woman to breast feed her baby in public rather than give it milk from a cow?

These questions may seem silly to some, unanswerable to others. But, there is one thing we all have and demonstrate each day that is VERY REAL.

That 'thing' is called faith. We all show it each day as we wake up in the mornings, study in the evenings and sleep through the night. Yet, some people want to question it's very existence.

This Easter season, let's remember that faith is a very simple principle. It keeps us going. So, what's so difficult?

The very idea that the South Carolina Legislature recently passed up a chance to really 'liberate' the state is preposterous. It seems people like to talk about how close-minded South Carolina is. No lottery. Blue laws. Gee ... the next thing they'll do is reclose the grocery stores on Sundays like they used to be!

When I heard the S.C. state government preposterously vetoed the measure that would allow a simple minute at the beginning of school for prayer, I couldn't understand why. Then, I remembered the state still hasn't taken progressive steps to lower the 'rebel' flag from the State House. Things started coming together. I started thinking about S.C.'s future. Fright crept into my mind when I thought about it.

This is the grand ole U.S. of A. ... a country founded on religious principles. A country that allows its children to pledge allegiance to a man-made flag each school morning. Yet, we sit and debate the 'right' to legalize prayer in schools?

Sounds pretty hypocritical, huh?

It's a shame people disrespect the right to talk to God. They need to re-prioritize themselves. What's the problem? Oh yeah — we have people out there who say it wouldn't be fair to people of other 'faiths'. But who are we really being 'faithful' to? Are we being more faithful to other people versus the Creator? We are not even giving ourselves a chance when we disrespect God, who is Truth, Faith and Love combined.

The idea that we would even debate the right to prayer is ridiculous! Prayer should be, and is, a part of life for those who allow it to be.

Spirituality is far more powerful than religion can ever be, even though they are interrelated. However, people often mistake the two as being one and the same. This explains the number of religions existing out there, but there is, and always will be, one infinite spiritual realm.

At any rate, disallowing our future, which rests in our children, to experience the advantages of spirituality is not being fair to them or to ourselves. Within it, lies our very existence.

Jesus once said, "Let the children come to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as they," Mark 10: 14. He also said, "Anyone who causes one of these children to doubt me, (shall suffer great punishment)," Matthew 18: 5,6.

Enough said.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CPU programs don't waste fees

To the editor:

I regret the fact that I must waste valuable space in The Gamecock and the time of its readers correcting some of the libelous statements set forth by Kipp Shives in his April 10 editorial. However, as the current vice president of the Carolina Program Union, I believe it is my duty to inform USC students of the truth concerning several of the misleading accusations set forth in this editorial. As we are held accountable for spending student activity fees wisely and responsibly, I hope that students will not lose faith in our organization because of one writer's failure to research his topic fully. Hopefully, this letter will "set the record straight," so to speak.

First of all, Mr. Shives grossly misled readers of The Gamecock with his editorial statement that "... Cockstock will cost \$12,000 for Dream (sic) So Real, a band currently off its label because it could not sell enough records." This is, very plainly, not true. Had Kipp Shives researched the entire program carefully, he would have discov-

ered that the \$12,000 allocated to this event covers not only the cost of four bands including Dreams So Real, but also the technical costs for an outdoor show, contractual costs and obligations, equipment fees and rentals and security for the performers and spectators. Many of these costs are forced upon us, either contractually or by the facility we choose to utilize. Additionally, all of the publicity that has been released to campus, including posters, flyers, Free Times ads, Gamecock ads, table tents and banners, is included in this allocation. In this case, we do not feel that we have in any way used our funds irresponsibly, as Mr. Shives would have readers believe.

Secondly, Shives mentioned that "... the University of Georgia's union is bringing Pearl Jam to their P.E. field." The Carolina Program Union Contemporary Sounds Committee has researched bringing acts such as this to our campus, but its tighter budget simply cannot accommodate a program of this magnitude. For example, last year, when more funds were available, this committee looked at an act of comparable notoriety, Tony! Toni! Tone!, which would have cost approximately \$11,000. Once advertising, security and technical costs were added to

this artist fee, this concert would have cost nearly \$20,000. In order to bring an act like this to campus and still provide other musical programs for students, this committee would have to charge an admission price to all students. This year, the committee opted to spend its allocation on quality programs, charging very little if anything at all, thereby allowing more people to attend. Consistently cost effective programming on the committee's part has allowed it to retain enough funding to organize Cockstock, a free event which includes, as previously noted, four bands, instead of the one that would have come with the price of Pearl Jam.

Finally, Kipp Shives claimed that the "... Spin Doctors/Lucy Brown ballroom show lost more than \$4,000 in student activity fee dollars." If Shives had checked the official records in the CPU office, he would have found that the money spent on this program, which cost less than \$4,000, was spent on the Pontiac New Music College Tour, which featured the Spin Doctors and Lucy Brown. This program consisted of not only a concert but a merchant's fair as well. However, the money spent on this event was not "lost," as Mr. Shives claims, but spent responsibly in order to reach the students of USC.

Many of the more than 2,000 participants in this event came away with free items including candy, T-shirts, audio tapes and compact discs. We feel that the amount of money spent on this program is justified by the large turnout and the fact that the majority of the participants did not leave the event empty-handed.

The aim of the Carolina Program Union is not to create revenue. Our student activity fees are spent in order to give something back to the Carolina community, be it through cultural enrichment, entertainment or education. When CPU charges for an event, it is only to offset the costs of a more expensive program. We pride ourselves on the fact that we have brought diverse, enjoyable and often thought-provoking acts to Carolina this year. Since last August, CPU has been responsible for the display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, a trip to New York City, the Ladysmith Black Mambazo concert, the Breakfast with President Palms series and all of the movies that have run in the Russell House Theatre on Tuesday through Saturday nights, among others.

John S. Cunningham  
Vice President, Carolina Program Union

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